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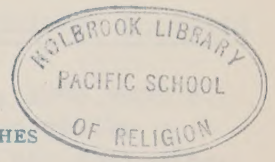
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the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
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No. 12

Fifteenth Year

March 25, 1948

Amsterdam Special

Worship Services at the Assembly

Men and women from Churches of the four corners of the earth will gather in Holland's historic Cathedral, the "New Church", on Sunday afternoon August 22, for the high and holy purpose of worship. Before God's throne there will be a deep sense of oneness. The five presidents of the World Council will together with representatives from the Netherlands Reformed Church and a representative from the Younger Churches take part in this opening service.

In order that all Assembly persons may partake of the Holy Communion, Communion services are being arranged by representatives of four different traditions. They will be held on succeeding days beginning August 29. The order is as follows: Reformed, the Anglican, Eastern Orthodox and the Lutheran. At the Reformed service ministers of other Churches will be among those officiating. Baptised and communicant members of the Churches attending the Assembly are invited to commune at this service.

A Holy Communion preparatory service will be held on Saturday evening, August 28. There will be those at the Assembly who will desire to worship at other Communion services than the one at which they commune. This is possible.

Every morning during the Assembly worship services will be held in the church near the Concertgebouw. Each of these services will be different in its liturgical form since the leaders have been selected from the various Churches and traditions. The closing worship service for each day will be of a less formal nature and will follow to some extent at least the pattern which the worship committee has prepared.

As the Assembly began so will it end. The closing worship service will, however, in a sense bring together a new group of people. The names and faces will be the same as those who attended the opening service; the experiences of fellowship, or worship, of earnestly facing the tremendous tasks which were before them in the presence of this kind of world, however, will not have left them the same.

E.P.S. Geneva

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CZECHOSLOVAKIAChurch Sends a Message to Prime Minister Gottwald

The Synodal Council of the Czech Brethren Church on March 3, 1948 sent a letter to Dr Klement Gottwald, the Czechoslovak Prime Minister, signed by the Moderator, Dr Joseph Krenek, and by Dr K. Bohac. From this we quote the following:

"In face of the recent happenings, we, the Synodal Council, wish to state on behalf of the Church, that nothing has been changed in the positive attitude of the Church towards the people and the government, as regards those social and political endeavours towards building a social system on principles of humanity, freedom and the assurance of adequate subsistence for all... Our Church has its roots in the glorious Christian principle which has been manifest since the time of the apostles as an intensive struggle for God's order in the world, the order of truth, justice, respect for humanity, freedom and real brotherhood...

"We assure you, at this time, as your new government starts its work, that we live and we desire to live according to those principles of Christ. We are ready to help you to fight evil and sin in all its forms, by the education of a self-disciplined and responsible people, and we wish to offer to the nation and state the service of those high spiritual, moral and cultural values which must through all changes remain as the foundations of the life of the individual, of the nation and of humanity. This has always been and remains the mission of the Church of Christ. We firmly believe that we shall have full freedom to exercise this our service in our time and through your understanding, and that you will accept our sincere work and constructive effort on behalf of the highest values."

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATESMarshall Speaks to the American Churches

We give below the essential part of the statement made by Secretary of State Marshall on March 11, at the public meeting on the European Recovery Programme, sponsored by the Federal Council of Churches in America and attended by President Truman and other high government officials.

"...I think you must realise", said Marshall, "that it is not possible for us in America to reach a full understanding of the reactions of people who not only suffered terribly and bitterly during the war but are still struggling against grim poverty and cold, uncertainty of the future and acute dread of to-morrow. We must realise that they look to us either with hope because of our riches and security, or with dislike if not hatred for the very same reason. In considering the reactions, the situation of these peoples, we should consider, by comparison, our own blessings, our comforts and prosperity, our great liberties and our freedom to say what we please and do pretty much as we please, and our right to worship in whatever manner or faith our conscience dictates. With these great privileges, I suppose we never can be brought to a full realisation of the dilemma of the peoples of Europe.

"Now with these thoughts in mind, I turn to what we should do affirmatively and immediately. The proposal was made last summer for what has taken form as the European Recovery Programme. That proposal had as its basis a desire to help

and in no way to hinder, a desire to promote the peace and in no way to threaten war. It was not an easy decision last June to submit a proposal which would involve the American people in large contributions for the next four years. Frankly, I anticipated immediate and emphatic expressions of opposition from many in the U.S.A. Actually, there was at the time little of public opposition. Instead, there was astonishment at the speed with which the countries of Western Europe reacted and the remarkable demonstration of 16 sovereign nations making concessions one to the other among themselves, banding together for the good of all...

"The appeal to prayer has a powerful influence in American life because we are at heart a deeply religious people, though we do not always admit it. I think the Church and the school are two institutions in American life which must play a very important part in meeting the world problems. There is, therefore, a heavy responsibility resting on the ministers of the Church and the teachers of the young... Prayer is one of the great means of keeping alive our belief in the ultimate triumph of the Christian principles which underlie our civilisation. This faith in our ideals is particularly important when we are forced to be realistic in the face of an extremely serious world situation. The influence of the Church, of your churchmen, will be a tremendous factor in reaching wise decisions." E.P.S. Geneva

NORWAY

Norway Receives and Gives

Norway, still receiving aid for reconstruction from Churches in other nations, has now joined the ranks of the "giving countries".

Churches in Norway have raised 150,000 Norwegian crowns for relief in Europe outside of Norway and expect to raise considerably more. The funds are being collected and administered by a new organisation: Menighetspleienes Landsforbund (National Church Relief Society). Chairman of the society is Pastor C. Bonnevie Svendsen, who is also chairman of the Reconstruction Department's Committee in Norway.

The relief work of the society will be confined for the present to child-feeding programmes, principally in Germany. As secular agencies increasingly take over that task, the society hopes to devote itself to the more distinctively spiritual needs of European Churches.

What is the logic of the giving for European relief by the Norwegian Churches when they themselves are receiving relief on a big scale? The answer is two-fold: Churches in Norway which have not been seriously affected by the war wish to make a gesture of gratitude for the help which their sister Churches are receiving from Churches outside of Norway. There are Churches in Norway which have given for the rebuilding of destroyed churches in their country, but which want to do something additional for the material relief of people in countries where the supply of food is still a major problem. E.P.S. Geneva

"New Refugees"

At the annual meeting of the World Council of Churches Refugee Commission meeting in Paris in February last, a report submitted by a sub-Commission on "New Refugees" was unanimously adopted in plenary session (see E.P.S. No. 9).

The sub-Commission discussed the grave problems that face Christians in these days of suffering and confusion, now that there are more refugees than in 1945 and conditions worse. All reports of latest developments indicated new complications and deteriorations in the human aspects of the overall problem. The highlights of these reports are:

- a) the infiltration into France of some 3,000 a month of re-refugees;
- b) the continuing influx into Italy of Yugoslav "Volksdeutsche" (of German ethnical origin) and Hungarians;
- c) the forthcoming release from concentration camps in Germany into a social vacuum already crowded with misery, of 3,000 Roumanian, Hungarian and Yugoslav Volksdeutsche;
- d) the great clandestine movement of various groups into Austria, increasing the refugee population by 62,000 over the figures for a year ago, in spite of considerable emigration;
- e) the mass of homeless Greeks, 500,000, or 7% of the population forced to flee from the civil war areas.

The Commission could not ignore the India-Pakistan situation, with many millions of Hindus and Moslems mass transfer on the lowest refugee level, plus a number of Christians, forced out of Pakistan. In China also, there are millions of homeless wanderers and now arises the possibility of new refugees from Palestine. A full catalogue of facts would be far beyond the scope of this brief report.

Two lines of action are urged: The first is directed towards governments, and the agency of the United Nations, IRO (International Refugee Organisation). It suggests the liberalisation of the terms of reference of IRO, or of their interpretation, and the necessity for more ample financial support to enable IRO to provide the adequate assistance to even the limited number under its care. Attention is drawn again to the basic fact that re-settlement must be found for the maximum numbers as the only true solution to their problem.

The second line of action is directed to the Churches which have a three-fold obligation: to make known to their governments their concern at the inadequate financial provision for IRO, the restrictions and exclusions of its charter and the failure to provide for a long term approach to the refugee problem; to increase their financial support for all the work of the Churches and church agencies among the refugees; and above all to expand their local efforts in matters of resettlement, to assure the best possible opportunities for livelihood and normal social contacts and a true Christian welcome for all who come within their borders.

The Committee also gave consideration to one of the refugee problems which causes deep concern, namely the jeopardy of family life. Much of the resettlement thus far ignored family ties and commitments. The Refugee Commission was urged to communicate to IRO a strong protest against any resettlement plans which fail to recognise family obligations as basic to the problem.

A second major problem was that of tenure of social security. It was felt that governments ought to assure all resettlers that even upon termination of initial employment, they will not be cast out as re-refugees. E.P.S. Geneva

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UNITED STATES"Time" Features Reinhold Niebuhr

It is a sign of the times that a highly popular illustrated weekly, like the American magazine "Time" has just brought out a special 25th anniversary number (March 8, 1948), with the photograph of a well-known theologian on the cover. And it is certainly significant if the explanatory text stresses the fact that a theologian like Dr Reinhold Niebuhr has a message to give, which is more important for our restless, confused century than all the efforts of the United Nations Organisation. We quote part of the article:

On 'Time's cover this week is Reinhold Niebuhr. Many editors would not consider him news. In the headline sense, he says nothing 'sensational'. Yet Niebuhr is conducting an enquiry that may turn out to be more important to the 20th century than the United Nations Assembly or any investigation by the Senate. For decades large segments of the Christian Churches shied away from theology; God was 'a lurking Luminosity, a cosy thought'. Against the current of his day, Niebuhr pursues a quest into the nature of God, of man, of sin. What Niebuhr thinks has a profound connection with the business of establishing and maintaining a democratic civilisation. Niebuhr is not easy to understand (Time's editors, at least, do not find him easy), but it is Time's job to make Niebuhr's thought clear to those of its readers who are not adept at the language of theological discussion..."

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATESAgainst Compulsory Church Attendance

Declaring that "the State must never undertake to force men to go to church", Dr Louis D. Newton, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has protested against a recent sentence of the Dekalb City Court that four young men be required to attend Sunday School and church every Sunday during a two-year probationary period.

There must be no coercion in religion, either from civil or ecclesiastical authorities, if we are to preserve inviolate the cherished principle of religious liberty and its inevitable corollary, separation of Church and State". Dr Newton referred to the court's sentence "as contrary to the clear teaching of the Bible that religion is a matter of persuasion and not of coercion..."

E.P.S. Geneva

KOREABlack Market Bibles

A report has been received from Miss Margaret Billingsley, Executive Secretary of the "Women's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church for Japan, Korea and the Philippines", that the shortage of Bibles and Christian literature in Korea is today greater than ever. One striking proof of this is the fact that Bibles are being sold on the black market, because they are unobtainable in the bookshops.

E.P.S. Geneva

CANADAUnited Church Asks Civil Marriage Laws

A resolution calling on provincial legislatures to make provisions for civil marriage was adopted by the board of Evangelism and Social Service of the United Church of Canada. The action was urged "so as to relieve ministers of any

obligation to participate in marriage proceedings which are not in accordance with the teaching of the Church, and also to avoid necessity for persons not desiring Christian marriage with its obligations to participate in such vows and declarations as the Church requires."

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANY

Churches Take a Stand on the Partition of Germany

The church representatives assembled at Cassel for the conference of the Council of the Evangelical Church of Germany on March 9 and 10, published "a message from the Christian Churches in Germany concerning a just peace, and against the partition of the German people". This message was signed by members of the EKD, the Union of Evangelical Free Church Communities, the Evangelical Fellowship, the Methodist Church, the Old Catholic Church and the Association of Mennonites.

"The events of the last few months have brought out people face to face with a question of tremendous gravity. During the last three years the frontier between the Western and Eastern Zones of Occupation has become more and more of an obstacle to the material and spiritual recovery of the German people. And now we are faced by the danger that Germany will be permanently torn asunder by different economic, social and spiritual forces. This situation compels us to raise our voice in admonition and entreaty. For peace itself is involved.

"It is contrary to the Will of God that the nations should attack one another again and again, leaving millions of dead on the fields of battle. And our Churches would not be the Church of Jesus Christ, if they did not do everything in their power - in view of the immeasurable suffering brought upon humanity by the last war - to bring about peace at last. That is why we admonish our own people to abandon false ideals of power, and to maintain a really peaceful attitude.

"But we also admonish and entreat those in whose hands lies the decision concerning our material future: 'Let there be peace!'"

The message goes on to mention that people's sense of justice is endangered, if an arbitrary barrier is erected across a country, the effect of which is also to create a division within the Church. "This is not the way to create peace. History teaches that dismemberment by force always has disastrous results and is an obstacle to real peace. Is the world to experience that once again?" The Churches point out the danger involved in dismemberment by force, combined with different economic systems and a different political outlook, and the moral effect on the future of the people. "Real peace can only be brought about if the natural conditions of life are restored in the centre of Europe... But we urge our German people, in spite of everything that may happen, not to lose their way in embitterment and hopelessness, nor to be led astray (through compulsion and intolerable conditions) from the desire for honest work, moral control and the honourable desire for peace.

"The future of our people lies in God's hand. His hand can be very hard in judgment, but it is always merciful to them, that fear Him." E.P.S. Geneva

